

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method comprising:
 - generating application-specific content at a source device;
 - converting the application-specific content into corresponding device-independent formatted data;
 - providing the device-independent formatted data to at least one service device operatively coupled to the source device;
 - using the source device to interactively provide additional information associated with the device-independent formatted data to the service device; and
 - causing the service device to process the device-independent formatted data based at least in part on the additional information.
2. The method as recited in Claim 1, wherein generating application-specific content further includes creating at least one file having data that represents content selected from a group comprising graphical content, video content, and audio content.
3. The method as recited in Claim 2, wherein the graphical content includes graphical content selected from a group comprising textual content and image content.
4. The method as recited in Claim 2, wherein causing the service device to process the device-independent formatted data based at least in part on the additional information further includes printing at least one document corresponding to the graphical content.

5. The method as recited in Claim 2, wherein causing the service device to process the device-independent formatted data based at least in part on the additional information further includes selectively distributing at least one file corresponding to the graphical content.

6. The method as recited in Claim 1, wherein converting the application-specific content into corresponding device-independent formatted data further includes converting the application-specific content into corresponding Graphics Device Interface (GDI) data.

7. The method as recited in Claim 6, wherein converting the application-specific content into corresponding device-independent formatted data further includes converting the GDI data into corresponding Page Description Language (PDL) data.

8. The method as recited in Claim 7, wherein the PDL data includes at least one type of formatted data selected from a group of different types of formatted data that includes PostScript formatted data and Portable Document Format (PDF) formatted data.

9. The method as recited in Claim 1, wherein providing the device-independent formatted data to the at least one service device further includes uploading the device-independent formatted data to the service device over a network.

10. The method as recited in Claim 9, wherein the network is selected from a group of networks comprising the Internet, an intranet, a local area network (LAN), a wide area network (WAN), a TCP/IP-based network, a wireless communication link, and a wire-based communication link.

11. The method as recited in Claim 9, wherein uploading the device-independent formatted data to the service device over the network further includes using a communication protocol to upload at least one file, the communication protocol being selected from a group of protocols comprising a HyperText Transfer Protocol (HTTP), Secure HTTP (SHTTP), and a File Transfer Protocol (FTP).

12. The method as recited in Claim 9, wherein using the source device to interactively provide additional information associated with the device-independent formatted data to the service device further includes operating at least one support program on the source device that communicates over the network with the service device.

13. The method as recited in Claim 12, wherein the at least one support program provides a graphical user interface (GUI) configured to accept inputs establishing the additional information associated with the device-independent formatted data.

14. The method as recited in Claim 13, wherein the at least one support program includes a browser application.

15. The method as recited in Claim 1, wherein using the source device to interactively provide additional information associated with the device-independent formatted data to the service device further includes causing a port monitor process to launch at least one support program on the source device that communicates over the network with the service device.

16. The method as recited in Claim 1, wherein the source device is selected from a group of client devices comprising a computer, a desktop personal computer (PC), a laptop PC, a personal digital assistant (PDA), and a mobile communication device.

17. The method as recited in Claim 16, wherein the source device includes a computer operatively configured with a Windows® operating system.

18. The method as recited in Claim 1, wherein the service device includes at least one computer operating as a server.

19. A computer-readable medium having computer instructions for performing acts comprising:

causing a source device to convert application-specific content into corresponding device-independent formatted data and output the device-independent formatted data to at least one service device; and

configuring the source device to interactively provide additional information associated with the device-independent formatted data to the service device.

20. The computer-readable medium as recited in Claim 19, wherein the application-specific content is provided in at least one file having data that represents content selected from a group comprising graphical content, video content, and audio content.

21. The computer-readable medium as recited in Claim 20, wherein the graphical content includes graphical content selected from a group comprising textual content and image content.

22. The computer-readable medium as recited in Claim 19, wherein causing the source device to convert application-specific content into corresponding device-independent formatted data further includes converting the application-specific content into corresponding Graphics Device Interface (GDI) formatted data.

23. The computer-readable medium as recited in Claim 22, wherein converting the application-specific content into corresponding device-independent formatted data further includes converting the GDI data into corresponding Page Description Language (PDL) data.

24. The computer-readable medium as recited in Claim 23, wherein the PDL data includes at least one type of formatted data selected from a group of different types of formatted data that includes PostScript formatted data and Portable Document Format (PDF) formatted data.

25. The computer-readable medium as recited in Claim 19, wherein causing the source device to output the device-independent formatted data to the at least one service device further includes uploading the device-independent formatted data to the service device over a network.

26. The computer-readable medium as recited in Claim 25, wherein the network is selected from a group of networks comprising the Internet, an intranet, a local area network (LAN), a wide area network (WAN), a TCP/IP-based network, a wireless communication link, and a wire-based communication link.

27. The computer-readable medium as recited in Claim 25, wherein uploading the device-independent formatted data to the service device over the network further includes using a communication protocol to upload at least one file, the communication protocol being selected from a group of protocols comprising a HyperText Transfer Protocol (HTTP), a Secure HTTP (SHTTP), and a File Transfer Protocol (FTP).

28. The computer-readable medium as recited in Claim 25, wherein configuring the source device to interactively provide additional information associated with the device-independent formatted data to the service device further includes operating at least one support program on the source device that is configurable to communicate over the network with the service device.

29. The computer-readable medium as recited in Claim 28, wherein the at least one support program provides a graphical user interface (GUI)

configured to accept inputs establishing the additional information associated with the device-independent formatted data.

30. The computer-readable medium as recited in Claim 29, wherein the at least one support program includes a browser application.

31. The computer-readable medium as recited in Claim 19, wherein configuring the source device to interactively provide additional information associated with the device-independent formatted data to the service device further includes causing a port monitor process to launch at least one support program on the source device that communicates over the network with the service device.

32. The computer-readable medium as recited in Claim 19, wherein the source device is selected from a group of client devices comprising a computer, a desktop personal computer (PC), a laptop PC, a personal digital assistant (PDA), and a mobile communication device.

33. The computer-readable medium as recited in Claim 32, wherein the source device includes a computer operatively configured with a Windows® operating system.

34. The computer-readable medium as recited in Claim 19, wherein the service device includes at least one computer operating as a server.

35. An apparatus comprising logic configured to generate application-specific content, convert the application-specific content into corresponding device-independent formatted data, output the device-independent formatted data to at least one service device, and interactively provide additional information associated with the device-independent formatted data to the service device.

36. The apparatus as recited in Claim 35, wherein the content includes content selected from a group comprising graphical content, video content, and audio content.

37. The apparatus as recited in Claim 36, wherein the graphical content includes graphical content selected from a group comprising textual content and image content.

38. The apparatus as recited in Claim 35, wherein the logic is configured to convert the application-specific content into corresponding Graphics Device Interface (GDI) data.

39. The apparatus as recited in Claim 38, wherein the logic is further configured to convert the GDI data into corresponding Page Description Language (PDL) data.

40. The apparatus as recited in Claim 39, wherein the PDL data includes at least one type of formatted data selected from a group of different types of formatted data that includes PostScript formatted data and Portable Document Format (PDF) formatted data.

41. The apparatus as recited in Claim 35, wherein the logic is configurable to upload the device-independent formatted data to the service device over a network.

42. The apparatus as recited in Claim 41, wherein the network is selected from a group of networks comprising the Internet, an intranet, a local area network (LAN), a wide area network (WAN), a TCP/IP-based network, a wireless communication link, and a wire-based communication link.

43. The apparatus as recited in Claim 41, wherein the logic is configurable to upload the device-independent formatted data to the service device using a communication protocol selected from a group of protocols comprising a HyperText Transfer Protocol (HTTP), a Secure HTTP (SHTTP), and a File Transfer Protocol (FTP).

44. The apparatus as recited in Claim 41, wherein the logic is configurable to interactively communicate with the service device over the network via a graphical user interface (GUI) that is configured to accept inputs establishing the additional information associated with the device-independent formatted data.

45. The apparatus as recited in Claim 35, wherein the logic includes a port monitor process.

46. A system comprising:
a communication network;
at least one service device operatively coupled to the communication network and configured to provide at least one file handling process;
a source device operatively coupled to the communication network and configured to generate application-specific content, convert the application-specific content into corresponding device-independent formatted data, output the device-independent formatted data to the at least one service device, and interactively provide additional information associated with the device-independent formatted data to the service device.

47. The system as recited in Claim 46, wherein the content includes content selected from a group comprising graphical content, video content, and audio content.

48. The system as recited in Claim 47, wherein the graphical content includes graphical content selected from a group comprising textual content and image content.

49. The system as recited in Claim 46, wherein the source device is configured to convert the application-specific content into corresponding Graphics Device Interface (GDI) data.

50. The system as recited in Claim 49, wherein the source device is further configured to convert the GDI data into corresponding Page Description Language (PDL) data.

51. The system as recited in Claim 50, wherein the PDL data includes at least one type of formatted data selected from a group of different types of formatted data that includes PostScript formatted data and Portable Document Format (PDF) formatted data.

52. The system as recited in Claim 46, wherein the network is selected from a group of networks comprising the Internet, an intranet, a local area network (LAN), a wide area network (WAN), a TCP/IP-based network, a wireless communication link, and a wire-based communication link.

53. The system as recited in Claim 52, wherein the source device is configured to upload the device-independent formatted data to the service device using a communication protocol selected from a group of protocols comprising a HyperText Transfer Protocol (HTTP), a Secure HTTP (SHTTP), and a File Transfer Protocol (FTP).

54. The system as recited in Claim 52, wherein the source device is configured to interactively communicate with the service device over the network via a graphical user interface (GUI) that is configured to accept inputs establishing the additional information associated with the device-independent formatted data.

55. The system as recited in Claim 54, wherein the source device is configured to provide the GUI using a browser application.

56. The system as recited in Claim 55, wherein the source device is configured to use a port monitor process to launch the browser application.

57. The system as recited in Claim 46, wherein the source device is selected from a group of client devices comprising a computer, a desktop personal computer (PC), a laptop PC, a personal digital assistant (PDA), and a mobile communication device.

58. The system as recited in Claim 46, wherein the service device includes at least one computer operating as a server.